



Vestafjell's 20 Year Saga

by Annette R. Helgelien, 6/12/2010

It all began with some local Norskies in '88,
And now we think it's 20 years, let's celebrate!

But wait you say, the math's just not right,
Okay, it's true, but some Norwegians saw the light,

And formed a club, they chose Delta, Colorado as the place.

Folks from Montrose, Delta, Cedaredge, Eckart, and Austin set the pace.

A Sons of Norway lodge with Vestafjell chosen as the name.

In Norwegian, Vestafjell and western mountain mean the same.

Anita Seitz-president, Inger Bakke-treasurer, and Verna Parmenter-secretary, were chosen to lead.

On June 12, 1990, Sons of Norway International instituted the lodge and did the deed.

Vestafjell, 6-146, became the 54th lodge of Sons of Norway, District 6,

With 74 members Vestafjell received a charter at a gala mix,

In Grand Junction on October 20th of '90 was the lodge's Charter Banquet.

Celebrating heritage, fraternalism, and brotherly love, 150 members and guests met.

Jim Parmenter was chosen president of the western slope lodge of Colorado.

Today 17 Vestafjell members will receive 20 year pins, so--

Connie Gustad, Gus Gustad, Lillie Huwe, Lyle Huwe, Edie Klitzke, Arvid Koppang, Phyllis Larsen, John Oien, Darlene Overby, and Dwaine Overby, are not present. Congratulations- Florence Jacobson, Hal Jacobson, Glenice Overby, Sandra Tessem, Ron Thoreson, Sallie Thoreson, and Arletta Van Tassel.

In '90 Mona Grundt, of Hell, Norway, was crowned Miss Universe – a pretty gal,
And Norway's King Olav V died, dubbed “Folkekonger,” the people's King – a pal.

Vestafjell's bylaws were written, Norwegian folk dancers danced, and singers sang,
Lutefisk, torsk, lefse, and good Scandinavian food was served when the dinner bell rang.

Participation in winter sports clinics and Memorial Day services at Camp Hale,
History, culture, and traditions were learned and crafts were displayed without fail.

Colorado Kretsstevnes, District Six gatherings, and meetings galore,

Learning Norwegian, skits, door prizes, holidays, food and much more.

In '94 the Winter Olympics were in Lillehammer with many medals won,

The Norwegians were awarded a total of 26 medals, the most-- well done..

Americans Rasmussen, Moe, and Jansen were winners with Norwegian ancestry.

In '95 Sons of Norway International observed their 100th Anniversary; a part of our history.

One member this afternoon receives a membership pin for 15 years.

1995, just a few years late to join his charter member peers.

Congratulations, Tony Kovacic.

We had picnics, ice cream socials, Syttende Mai, and Parades on Veteran's Day,
July 4th parades, cultural festivals, community fairs, and a county library display.

Wood carving, needlework, Rosemaling, cooking —all cultural skills and art,

Besides celebrating Art and Culture at Cross Orchards, Sons of Norway did their part.

As well as being in a Collbran Lions Club Parade, giving sports medals, and a Midsummer event,

Several District 6 Merit Awards, SON Founders Certificates for Membership Achievement were sent.
Sons of Norway Recognition to editors with district 2nd place for Vestafjell Vandrer's newsletter,
Many celebrations of wedding anniversaries and special birthdays, how can it get any better?
Eight members receive pins for joining Sons of Norway ten years ago,
2000, the Millennium year, it seems, oh, so long ago.

Alison Koppang and JoAnn Trudell are not present. Congratulations Gladys Beals, Twyla Grosword, Bud Smock, Mary Ann Tapey, Amy Martinson, and Frank Bietz.

The lodge exhibited at many Family History Fairs and displayed Norwegian maps and information,
Along with heritage and cultural items, traditional foods, and handwork members had done.
King Harold sent condolences on behalf of the people of Norway after the twin towers fell,
A time of patriotism for Americans and unity with Norway against terrorism he did tell.
Congratulations were in order as Vestafjell received District 6 small lodge award for 2001.

In 2002, District Six celebrated their 50th Anniversary —what fun!

Music was by Gus and Connie and Trudy made a door prize, a rosemaled plate.

Colorado's SON celebrated 29 years with Vestafjell having about 100 members on that date.

More great food, more new members, more Norwegian sweaters and bunads worn to celebrate.

Officer/Leadership Workshops, more library books, and more goodies, oh, how we rate.

In '03 a genealogy group was formed to help members find their ancestral roots.

And the first Barneløpet on the western slope —kids find your ski boots!

Thanks to Ron and Sallie, lodge Sports Directors, with help from senior gold medalist, Swenson.

Cross country instructions with thrilling and challenging races the kids and members had such fun.

Fred, the Viking, made one of his many appearances with cowbells ringing,

They had such a great time in the snow and racing, that they all could have burst out singing.

A Norwegian, Robert Sorlie, won the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

Sorlie three times won Norway's 600 mile Finnmarkslopet Race with sled dog, Takk, setting the pace.

The Adopt a Highway program, Tubfrim Stamps, and monthly donations of food,

And emphasis on cultural and social programs set us all in a good mood.

Thanksgiving breakfast buffets with talks emphasizing Freedom, Faith, and Family,

Helped us give thanks for this country and blessings of family and friends we see,

A tradition of our immigrant ancestors who suffered many hardships traveling to this land.

And we tend to complain and tire easily from our walking trip from Vinland to Greenland.

We had Ladies' Breakfasts, Smorgasbords, Corned Beef Dinners, lefse making,

Soup luncheons, special holiday cookies and cakes, that's a whole lot of cooking and baking.

In January of '05 our own *Thor Grosword* was inducted into the US National Ski Hall of Fame!

He received the recognition in Upper Michigan but stated, "He didn't get to ski!" What a shame.

The Norwegian Vestafor Ensemble entertained with music and dance in '05.

The "America Chest Program," presented by members really made woodworking come alive,

For school children, three Lions and Rotary Clubs, and a meeting of Vestafjell.

The courageous Viking Vinland Voyageurs of Vestafjell have another story to tell--

They embarked with Olav Heyerdahl on his recreation of the historic tale,

Of the Kon-Tiki from Peru to Polynesia, the walkers set sail.

With hopes of arriving in October in time to remember that great Norseman sailor, Leif Erikson.

But first we gathered for Vestafjell's Anniversary —what fun!

A delicious Norwegian Banquet and great entertainment at Chipeta Golf Club set the scene,

With singing and dancing the night away we celebrated the year fifteen.

Now it's time to give five members their 5 year pin--

Randy Gregory and Larry Hurst are not present. Congratulations- Eulalia Skinner, Annette Helgelien, and Duane Helgelien.

Surprise! Fred , our strong, steely, tough Viking has a soft heart,
He said, "Ramy and I have agreed, we don't want to live apart."
So, a Viking wedding was planned according to Norwegian folk lore,
True to costumes, ceremony, food, brew, and more--

A Viking encampment in a mountain setting with Vestafjell included, seemed like a bit of heaven,
They became a united family, Norwegian Elk Hound, Fred and Ramy, and children —did I say seven?

Harmony, a highly acclaimed Norwegian musical group, favored us with song,
Vestafjell sponsored the American/Norwegian concert before a delighted throng.

What wonderful meetings —cooking and eating Norwegian delicacies,
Auctioning Scandinavian items, selling calendars, learning Norwegian words with Marge, what a tease.
Celebrating Christmas around the tree with a visit from Saint Lucia bringing buns for all.

A few Swedish and Danish traditions and customs thrown in —what a ball.

Officers learned organizational and leadership skills thanks to Lyle,
He explained that for the good of the lodge, all members need to go that second mile.

Monthly we are made aware of Sons of Norway fraternal benefits by LaRue,
Viking encampment picnics with food, crafts and skill contests with winners, quite a few,
Travel talks, Viking history, studying maps and explaining a treasure,
All of these are done with our heritage in mind —what a pleasure.

Now is the time to honor our pin recipient for 30 years,
Our trusty leader and president, Thor Groswold, who deserves to receive many cheers.

Thor was inducted into the Colorado Ski Hall of Fame in '91.

Followed by his induction into the national hall of fame in 2005, a worthy son
Of a Norwegian immigrant father who founded the Groswold Ski Company.

From the age of two Thor has been a skier, a ski racing judge and a skiing teacher of many.
Thor's favorite things: His family, skiing powder and SON where he can enjoy great Norwegian food!

Congratulations and Tusen Takk, Thor Groswold.

Richard Hall receives his 35 year pin and is unable to be here today. ***Congratulations.***

Winnie Perry and family joined a lodge in Santa Monica, CA in '60 when they lived on the coast,

At the urging of friends who said,"You don't have to be a Norskie, we don't boast!

They were very involved in a junior lodge and a Norwegian children's dance bunch.

Their excited Grand Junction neighbor, Pearl, invited them to a new Norwegian lodge for lunch,

So, they joined and became active members in Vestafjell and now she has earned a 50 year pin.

Congratulations Winnie Perry.

Pearl Kovacic joined SON back in 1943 in Oakland, CA and was a member wherever she went.
She was and continues to be thrilled that Vestafjell lodge was formed —she says,"Heaven sent!"

Pearl has been a member for 67 years and received her 65 year pin in 2008.

We'd like to recognize her for all of her help over the years that we really appreciate.

Chris Tessem said it was an honor to dress in a suit and go to the SON lodge with his Dad,

He joined Chicago's Bjornstjerne Bjornson (B B Lodge # 97) when he was 15, just a lad.

He felt special as it was men only, women just came to a social event,

Soon after 1940 the daughters got insurance and at 21 were eligible to join SON, equality that meant.

He and Sandra moved to Basalt, Colorado in '87 and were invited to transfer to Vestafjell on a tip,

So, they did in '90 in Glenwood Springs where he received his 50 year pin and lifetime membership.

Congratulations Chris Tessem-70 years in the Sons of Norway.